

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PARM, UR

SUBJECT: TTBT/PNE TREATY ARTICLE

1. TEXT OF AUGUST 5 EVANS AND NOVAK ARTICLE ENTITLED
"RUSSIA: ANOTHER BROKEN PROMISE" FOLLOWS:

2. QUOTE ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, THE SOVIET UNION EXPLO-
DED A LITTLE FIRECRACKER IN HONOR OF UNCLE SAM'S 200TH
BIRTHDAY: AN UNDERGROUND EXPLOSION WELL OVER THE LIMITS
AGREED TO BY THE U.S. AND THE U.S.S.R. IN THEIR MUCH
PUBLICIZED NEW TREATY.

IT WAS NO ACCIDENT. AN EVEN LARGER SOVIET UNDERGROUND
EXPLOSION WAS DETONATED JULY 29, JUST A WEEK AFTER THE
TREATY WAS SUBMITTED TO THE U.S. SENATE FOR RATIFICATION.
THOSE TWO BLASTS INFURIATED U.S. SCIENTISTS AND MILITARY
OFFICERS WHO UNDERSTOOD THE RUSSIANS HAD AGREED TO OBEY THE
INITIALED TREATY EVEN BEFORE U.S. RATIFICATION WOULD
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FORMALIZE IT.

AS USUAL, THERE HAS BEEN NO ANNOUNCEMENT OR COMMENT ON THE EXPLOSIONS EXCEPT IN CLASSIFIED DOCUMENTS. ON THE CONTRARY, ADDRESSING REPUBLICAN DELEGATES IN JACKSON, MISS.,

JULY 30, PRESIDENT FORD PRAISED SOVIET COMPLIANCE WITH PAST ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENTS. CLEARLY, NEITHER MR. FORD NOR SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER WANTS ANY UNPLEASANTNESS ABOUT SOVIET TREATY VIOLATIONS TO INTERFERE WITH THEIR FORTHCOMING BIG PUSH FOR A NEW STRATEGIC ARMS LIMITATIONS TALKS (SALT) AGREEMENT.

AN HONEST DIVISION OF OPINION EXISTS INSIDE THE ADMINISTRATION OVER HOW SERIOUS THE KREMLIN'S BAD FAITH REALLY WAS, PARTICULARLY SINCE CHANCES OF EARLY SENATE RATIFICATION ARE POOR. SOME HARD-LINERS BELIEVE THAT SOVIET FUDGING ON THIS RELATIVELY MINOR, UNRATIFIED TREATY DOES NOT COMPARE WITH FLAGRANT CHEATING ON THE MAJOR, RATIFIED SALT 1 TREATY (A VIOLATION AGAIN STUBBORNLY DENIED BY MR. FORD IN MISSISSIPPI JULY 30).

NEVERTHELESS, SERIOUS GOVERNMENT SCIENTISTS CLOSEST TO THE PROGRAM ARE INFURIATED. THEY SAY BOTH THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION AGREED TO FOLLOW THE 150 KILOTON CEILING ON PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS SET FORTH IN THE TREATY INITIALED BY MR. FORD AND CHAIRMAN LEONID BREZHNEV MAY 28. THE U.S., IN FACT, OBEYED THAT LIMIT IN ITS ONE EXPLOSION SINCE THEN AND WILL DO SO IN THE FUTURE.

NOT SO THE SOVIET JULY 4 BLAST. WHILE PUBLICLY IGNORING THE EXPLOSION, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WAS PRIVATELY FINESSING IT. EVEN SECRET DOCUMENTS CIRCULATED INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT LISTED THE BLAST VAGUELY AS 100 KILOTONS-PLUS, IN CONTRAST TO THE PAST PRACTICE OF PRECISE ESTIMATES.

SUCH IMPRECISION SEEMS MORE THE PRODUCT OF DIPLOMATIC SUBTLETY THAN SCIENTIFIC CAUTION. U.S. SCIENTISTS, AS FAMILIAR WITH THE GEOLOGIC FORMATIONS OF THE SOVIET UNDERGROUND TESTING AREAS AS THEY ARE WITH THE BACKS OF THEIR OWN HANDS, ARE CONFIDENT THE EXPLOSION EASILY UNCLASSIFIED

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EXCEEDED 200 KILOTONS.

IGNORING THIS EXCESS, MR. FORD ON JULY 22 SENT TO THE SENATE FOR RATIFICATION TWO TREATIES: THE PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSION TREATY HE HAD INITIALED IN MAY AND THE WEAPONS TEST BAN TREATY, ALSO SETTING A 150 KILOTON LIMIT, THAT WAS INITIALED BY BREZHNEV AND PRESIDENT NIXON

JULY 3, 1974.

ONE WEEK LATER CAME THE JULY 29 BLAST, ALSO EXCEEDING 200 KILOTONS BUT AT FIRST CONFUSED BY SEISMIC EXPERTS WITH AN ACTUAL EARTHQUAKE NEAR THE CASPIAN SEA. SKEPTICAL

U.S. SCIENTISTS BELIEVE THE SOVIETS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE EARTHQUAKE TO DETONATE THEIR DEVICE IN HOPES IT WOULD NOT BE NOTICED, BUT KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICIALS HERE SCOFF AT THIS NOTION AS CARRYING THE CONSPIRACY THEORY TOO FAR.

THESE OFFICIALS, INCLUDING SOME WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN CALLED SOFT-BOILED, BELIEVE THE SENATE'S DISINTEREST IN RATIFYING THE TREATIES ANY TIME SOON JUSTIFIED THE SOVIET ACTION, EVEN IF IT LED THE RUSSIANS INTO BREAKING AN INFORMAL PROMISE.

BUT EVEN THAT DOES NOT EXPLAIN THE OBVIOUS INTENT OF THE ADMINISTRATION TO KEEP THE UNDERGROUND EXPLOSIONS COVERED UP. ON THE MORNING OF JULY 30, MR. FORD ATTENDED A NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING DEALING WITH ARMS CONTROL MEASURES AND PRESUMABLY WAS FILLED IN ON THE SOVIET EXPLOSIONS. YET, THAT AFTERNOON IN MISSISSIPPI, HE DELIVERED HIS EUPHORIC DECLARATION OF FAITH IN SOVIET PROMISES.

HAVING PRAISED THE PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSION TREATY AS A DIPLOMATIC BREAKTHROUGH OUT OF ALL PROPORTION TO ITS APPARENT WORTH, MR. FORD WAS NOT ABOUT TO RECORD PUBLICLY THAT ONLY THE U.S., NOT THE SOVIET UNION, IS ABIDING BY IT.

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OFFICIAL U.S. RETICENCE OVER PUBLICIZING MOSCOW'S JULY 4 FIRECRACKER ACTUALLY SHROUDS AN INTENT GOING WELL BEYOND THE QUESTION OF LIMITING NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS, WHICH IS AT BEST ONLY A SECONDARY ASPECT OF OVERALL ARMS CONTROL. WITH DR. KISSINGER PRESSING FOR A SALT II AGREEMENT FOLLOWING THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION, MR. FORD HAS AN OBVIOUS POLITICAL STAKE IN CONCEALING ANOTHER BROKEN RUSSIAN PROMISE. END QUOTE. HABIB

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